

Longevity 148

Chapter 148: Ying Zheng: What? It Was Zhao Feng Who Saved Tai Hou? (Part 4)

Although Ying Zheng showed little emotion, the palpable coldness and murderous intent were impossible to hide.

If he truly hadn't brought her back, Tu Sui's life would have reached its end. At this point, even Empress Dowager Huayang wouldn't have been able to protect him.

"The Tai Hou has been safely brought back," Tu Sui said, raising his head with a fearful expression.

Upon hearing this, the murderous aura filling Ying Zheng dissipated, and he secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

"Tu Sui, do you admit your guilt?" Ying Zheng coldly demanded.

Tu Sui knelt on the ground, responding in fear, "Your servant acknowledges his guilt."

"Your servant was commanded to guard the Yong City Royal Palace, yet allowed the Tai Hou to be abducted by traitors."

"This is my dereliction of duty. Please impose a heavy punishment, Great King," he implored.

Tu Sui naturally would not deny this crime, because it was simply undeniable. Even if there were spies from other countries within the Royal Palace, he was in charge of its guard, and as the Commander, his responsibility was undeniable.

"It's good that you admit your guilt," Ying Zheng said coldly.

At this moment, a minister from the Mi Clan stepped forward and proclaimed loudly, "Great King, although Commander Tu did indeed fail in his duties, he ultimately brought back the Tai Hou, thereby atoning for his mistake with a meritorious deed. Please impose a lighter punishment."

"I concur," Fusu immediately stood up in support. "Commander Tu has also atoned for his crime with a meritorious deed. Please grant him a lighter punishment, Father."

Behind Fusu, his maternal family was of the Mi Clan, as was Empress Dowager Huayang. Over the years Tu Sui had guarded Yong City, he had naturally curried favor with Empress Dowager Huayang. It was evident that Fusu's plea for clemency was at the Empress Dowager's behest.

But at that moment, something unexpected happened to Fusu and the minister from the Mi Clan.

Li Si actually stepped forward as well. "Great King, Commander Tu was indeed derelict in his duties, so a reduction in salary and demotion in rank should suffice as punishment. This time, the Tai Hou was not lost; on the contrary, this incident serves as a warning to Qin, revealing that spies from other nations still remain within our palace."

"Please grant Commander Tu a lighter punishment, Great King."

After Li Si spoke, the new nobles in the court aligned with his faction also chimed in, "We concur."

A discerning person could see Fusu's attempt to win over Tu Sui, and Li Si naturally wouldn't sit idly by. This was an easy opportunity to offer goodwill, and he wouldn't let it pass.

Furthermore, Li Si understood Ying Zheng very well.

Although Tu Sui was stationed in Yong City, his role there was very important. Being appointed as Commander by Ying Zheng was a sign of high regard. This time, the Tai Hou had returned, after all. The punishment would only be a minor admonishment. Regardless of the pleas for clemency, the outcome would not differ significantly.

Seeing so many court officials plead for Tu Sui, Ying Zheng nodded. "You ministers have spoken reasonably."

"Indeed, Commander Tu was negligent in his duties, but he made every effort to compensate afterward by retrieving the Tai Hou, thus preventing a grave mistake. I can pardon Tu Sui's crime."

Upon hearing this, the ministers who had pleaded for Tu Sui echoed in unison, "The Great King is wise!"

But at this moment, Tu Sui spoke again, "Great King, it was not I who rescued the Tai Hou. She was saved by someone else. I merely brought her back."

"Oh?" Ying Zheng's brow furrowed in surprise. "Someone else?"

"The kidnappers deliberately laid a false trail, leading my search to no avail. We later discovered that the traitors had gone down the Wei River, intending to enter the state of Wei."

"I led my Imperial Guards in pursuit but couldn't catch up. Just as the traitors were about to cross into Wei territory, I thought I might have lost the Tai Hou for good..."

As he spoke, a flash of lingering fear appeared in Tu Sui's eyes, and he paused for a moment. The court ministers were startled by his sudden stop.

"Commander Tu, who exactly rescued the Tai Hou?" a minister asked in astonishment.

"It was General Zhao Feng, who is stationed at Wei City," Tu Sui said loudly.

In the end, Tu Sui could have taken the credit for himself. He only needed to win over his Sharp Warriors. Even if an investigation followed, no one would have known, as only Zhao Feng's trusted aides were with him at the time. But Tu Sui was not such a petty man. By bringing back Concubine Zhao this time, he was already indebted to Zhao Feng. It was a life-saving favor, not just for him, but for all his brothers in the Yong City Imperial Guards. If he were to steal this merit, he would be less than human.

As soon as Zhao Feng's name was spoken, the entire court was filled with astonishment. Everyone, including Ying Zheng on the throne, was surprised.

"How could this matter be related to Zhao Feng?" Wang Jian couldn't help but speak out.

He was still holding back from telling Zhao Feng that his daughter was pregnant. After all, Wang Jian wanted to maintain a certain attitude toward Zhao Feng.

"Zhao Feng?" Han Fei's eyes lit up.

Although he had only spent a few days with Zhao Feng, Zhao Feng's unconventional methods and extraordinary eloquence—which had left Han Fei speechless for days on end—had made a deep impression. It had been several months since he last saw Zhao Feng. Speaking of which, Han Fei found he actually missed the man who had bested him in arguments for days.

If Zhao Feng knew, he would surely retort, "You're just a glutton for punishment. You don't want compliments; you want to be cursed out."

Chunyu Yue, who had been silent until now, suddenly spoke up. "Commander Tu, could it be that you sent someone to inform General Zhao Feng in advance, which is how he was able to successfully rescue the Tai Hou?"

Upon hearing this, Han Fei's brow furrowed slightly. He glanced at Chunyu Yue but remained silent.

He wasn't sure either. If Tu Sui really went along with Chunyu Yue's suggestion—claiming that he had sent someone to inform Zhao Feng to intercept the kidnappers, thus saving the Tai Hou—then the key merit would still belong to Tu Sui. After all, without Tu Sui's notification, Zhao Feng wouldn't have known to act.

Clearly, this was Chunyu Yue's intention. If Tu Sui is a wise man, he will surely accept this favor. Zhao Feng. I sent Men Jia to persuade him to cancel the marriage with the Wang Family, and he beat Men Jia into that state. This merit absolutely cannot go to Zhao Feng!

When his eldest disciple, Men Jia, returned from Yingchuan covered in injuries, it was undoubtedly a slap in the face to Chunyu Yue, and by extension, to Crown Prince Fusu.

Although Fusu knew nothing of this, Chunyu Yue already considered himself to be acting on Fusu's behalf. He was, after all, the teacher of the Eldest Imperial Son, personally appointed by the Great King. He, Chunyu Yue, would naturally remember the grudge for Zhao Feng beating Men Jia. This time, he was obviously setting a trap.

However, Tu Sui had no intention of taking the credit, and he failed to detect the implied malice in Chunyu Yue's words.

"Speaking of which," Tu Sui stated truthfully, "aside from my Imperial Guard Army and the four units of Prefecture Soldiers dispatched by the Great King to hunt the kidnappers, I informed no one else, let alone General Zhao Feng who was thousands of miles away in Yingchuan."

"I did not know General Zhao Feng before this incident."

"The general's successful interception of the kidnappers and rescue of the Tai Hou was a complete coincidence."